

St. Davids Church  
Radnor  
Delaware County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA. 146  
143

HABS  
PA  
13-RAD  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
Philadelphia District

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Prepared at Washington Office

ADD. BULM  
FOLLOWS...

St. David's Church (Episcopal)  
W. side of Valley Forge Rd., .2 mi. NE of  
Church and Darby-Paoli Rds.

HABS No. PA-176

Wayne  
Newtown Township  
Delaware County  
Pennsylvania

HABS  
PA,  
23-RAD,  
1-

Addendum to:

St. David's Church  
Radnor  
Delaware County  
Pennsylvania  
(as originally recorded)

#### PHOTOGRAPHS

#### WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SAINT DAVID'S CHURCH  
(Episcopal)

HABS No. PA-176

HABS  
PA  
23-RAD  
1-

Addendum to:

Saint David's Church  
Radnor  
Delaware County  
Pennsylvania  
(as originally recorded)

Location: West side of Valley Forge Road, .2 mile northeast of Church and Darby-Paoli Roads, Wayne, Newtown Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Saint David's Church.

Present Use: Church.

Significance: The small, rectangular stone Episcopal church was built from 1715 to 1717 by a Welsh-speaking congregation. It is the oldest non-Quaker church in the area and one of the earliest in the State. General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, a Revolutionary War hero, is buried in the graveyard. (For a photograph of his grave, see: St. David's Church, Grave of General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, HABS No. PA-176-B).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The cornerstone was laid on May 9, 1715. East gable has a 1715 date stone, which is a modern recutting. The church opened in 1717.
2. Architect: Built by the church's Welsh congregation.
3. Original and subsequent owners: St. David's Church since construction.
4. Original plans and construction: The original church was a simple, one-room rectangular stone structure with a gable roof. The design was adapted from Welsh country church architecture. The original rectangular section is still one-room in plan, and measures 40' x 27'. It has increased in size by the addition of an exterior stairway and a rear addition. Its exterior is largely unaltered, and the originality of its design is evident here. The arched windows and the main south entrance still remain. Its interior, in contrast, has been altered over the years, although its simple appearance has been preserved. The pulpit was in the north end originally; it was later moved to its present east location. See also Alterations and additions.

5. Alterations and additions: The information below records the exterior and interior modifications in chronological order:

Exterior Changes

- 1767 First vestry room built by Cromwell Pierce and Peter Thomas, stonemasons. Measured about 17' square.
- 1771 Exterior stone stairway added on church's west side, providing access to west gallery, which was also added on west wall and part of south wall.
- 1786 Large east chancel window added by Benjamin Davis, a mason.
- 1830 Original 1767 vestry room replaced with a new vestry room, similar in dimensions to the old one, and built by a Mr. Erwin and William Nuzum.
- 1871 Present stone vestry room measuring 18' x 29' added to north rear side.
- 1893 New tall chimney added at west end and new central heating system installed.
- Circa 1920 Main south entrance given new arched double doors and a pedimented Georgian Revival porch.

Interior Changes

- Before 1770 Original open ceiling replaced with barrel vault ceiling. 18" thick masonry floor laid over original earthen floor.
- 1771 West gallery added on west wall and part of south wall.
- 1813 Original high pulpit on north wall replaced by a platform carrying a lectern-type pulpit.
- 1830 New pulpit built at east end, and new pews installed facing the new chancel. (The original pews facing the north pulpit had high backs). Gallery removed on south wall. The new pulpit, built by John Burns, was enclosed by a balustrade.
- 1893 New tall chimney added at west end and new central heating system installed.
- 1893-94 Lamp posts and chancel wainscoting designed by architect T. Mellon Rogers installed.

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| 1908 | Altar table and lectern installed; designed by R. Brognard Okie, architect. He also designed the new pulpit, but it was not installed until several years later. |
| 1925 | Present random flagstone floor laid by architect R. Brognard Okie.   |
| 1950 | 1771 west gallery altered to accommodate larger organ.   |

- B. Historical Context: During the Revolutionary War the church was used as a hospital.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow visited the church in 1876 during his visit to the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. He later wrote a poem about the church, "Old St. David's at Radnor."

More information may be found in the following: Henry Pleasants' History of Old St. David's Church, and the files at the Chester County Historical Society, under "Easttown Township. Churches - Protestant Episcopal - St. David's." See also Sources of Information.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This formerly rural church is a design adaptation of Welsh church architecture.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent condition in both the church and additions.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Before the additions were built, the church measured 40' x 27'. It is now about 44' x 27'. It is one-story high. The front south facade numbers three bays.
2. Foundations: Random rubble.
3. Walls: Random rubble. The north and west additions are also of random rubble.
4. Structural system: Stone-bearing walls in church.
5. Porch: A pedimented Georgian Revival porch is on the arched main entrance, built ca. 1920.
6. Chimneys: The original chimney is near the center of the church's roof. It was used for ventilation. Another chimney, added in 1893, is in the west end.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Original arched openings and arched stone lintels remain. Originally there was a door in the west end; this is not the door of the enclosed stairway leading to the west gallery.
- b. Windows and shutters: Original arched openings and arched stone lintels remain. Interesting shutter hardware. Additional information is found in Henry Pleasants' book, History of Old St. David's Church.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Steep-pitch gable, wood shingled roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The original church had a one-room rectangular plan. The current plan consists of the original church, north addition and an exterior stairway.
2. Stairways: Enclosed stone stairway on the west end, added in 1771.
3. Flooring: Random flagstone floor, a modern addition.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster walls. Barrel vault ceiling, also plastered. Trim is mostly original.
5. Hardware: Hardware of note has not been documented for this paper.
6. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating: Modern central heating.
  - b. Lighting: Modern brass antique reproduction candelbra and candlesticks.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The church is located on the west side of a narrow, winding road with a country feeling. South of the church is a small, narrow one-lane bridge. The surrounding setting also has a country feeling. Trees, open spaces, a nearby farm building and the rural character of the church create this feeling. (The surrounding area had been a rural place until after the end of World War II). A stone wall encloses the church. In the backyard is the graveyard, whose various access points are reached by walks. The church faces south.

2. Outbuildings: Old horse shed, built ca. 1850, is northwest of the church. See separate HABS documentation, St. David's Church, Horse Shed, for a photograph.

Across from the old church, on the east side of the road, is the newer, bigger chapel. It was built in 1957 to accommodate a bigger congregation. It was designed by the late Roland T. Addis, a Philadelphia architect specializing in church and residential design. It is not included in a separate HABS documentation.

There are also other buildings: "Old Rectory" (1844-45); the Ellen Waln Harrison Parish House (1924-25, Zantzinger, Borie and Medary, architects); Parish House addition (1950, Addis and Ashmead, architects); and the Sunday School/Education Building (1965, Kneedler, Mirick and Zantzinger, architects). HABS documentation for each building is not available.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early views: A large collection of prints from ca. 1812 onwards is to be found at the Chester County Historical Society, 225 N. High Street, West Chester, Pennsylvania. These include a copy of an 1812 drawing, a photograph in the 1850s, etc. The church has been the subject of many paintings, etchings, etc.

- B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania. Printed and manuscript files on the history of the church, filed under "Easttown Township. Churches - Protestant Episcopal - St. David's."

Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Manuscript ledgers of St. David's Church: Parish Record, 1705-1805; Record Book, 1820-1894; Minute Book of the Vestry and the Congregation, 1894-1921.

2. Secondary and published sources:

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Written by:

Bart Anderson  
Curator, Chester County Historical Society,  
West Chester, Pennsylvania  
August 1958

Written and edited by:

Susan McCown  
Historian, Historic American Buildings Survey  
September 1984